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## “Energy as a Weapon: Implications for US Policy”

Statement of Rep. Christopher Shays  
May 16, 2006

Dependence on foreign-supplied fuels is an emerging threat to our national security, and to the security of the international community. Suppliers understand fuels, such as oil or natural gas, can be used to influence or compromise our policies.

United States economic growth is a key force that propels the world economy. Fuels supply the energy that helps nations increase their standard of living. Without fuel the world economy will grind to a halt. In many cases the supply of these fuels is threatened by individuals, groups and regimes opposed to United States policies, often located in politically unstable parts of the world.

The former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mahathir Mohamad, said, "If we reduce oil output, prices will rise. It [oil] can be used as a weapon to protect the interests of Muslims."

Al Qaeda's Osama bin Laden and his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, have repeatedly called for attacks on key economic targets, especially energy sources.

Ali Larijani, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, said, "We would not like to use our oil as a weapon. We would not like to make other countries suffer."

Regimes and volatile regions also threaten fuel supply. In Latin America state-controlled energy sources limit the growth of global supplies by undermining or discouraging foreign investment. Russia's cutoff of natural gas to Ukraine was an attempt to use fuel supply as political leverage. In Sub-Saharan Africa, poor governance and corruption threaten the supply of fuels.

President Bush highlighted the risks of foreign fuel dependency when he declared, "America is addicted to oil," and insisted the United States "break this addiction." While recognizing the problem is laudable, little has been done to solve it.

We must break this addiction because suppliers exploit American energy dependence to influence our policies and terrorists see oil as our Achilles heel. We are funding both sides in the war on terrorism: The US military and on the other side, energy suppliers who support Islamic militants. Kicking the habit is an urgent necessity.

Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) and I introduced "The Energy for Our Future Act," which seeks to decrease United States dependence on foreign oil, protect the environment, build a market for renewable energy and promote energy conservation.

Our national security is threatened by our dependence on foreign countries that share neither our views on democracy nor our commitment to

combat radical Islamist terrorists. With less than three percent of the world's oil, but 25 percent of its use, we can never drill our way to energy security. Only by creating a forward-looking energy policy that reduces demand for fuels, especially oil, will we be able to lower gas prices and ensure our long-term independence.

Today's hearing highlights the growing use of energy as a weapon and the risks it poses to United States national security. Congressman Issa, this is a good opportunity for our two committees to examine this important issue that speaks to the security and the well being of our great nation.

We thank the witnesses for taking the time to appear before us today and look forward to hearing their testimony.